Our Toronto

VOL. 2 ISSUE 1 WINTER/SPRING 2009

Building a great city – together

Enjoying winter: seniors skating at Scarborough Civic Centre.

This group of seniors has been skating together for more than 15 years. While most are in their 70s, the youngest is 63 and the oldest is 93. See page 24 for a list of services for seniors.

TORONTO

The official publication of the City of Toronto

Emergency Planning special pull out section, pages 11-14

WHAT'S INSIDE

Toronto: 175 years young 2
Message from the Mayor 3
Budget 2009 ..... 4+5
Improving employment, social services 5
Public Health @ 125 years 6
Access to free dental care 6
Community investment grants 7
More work on lead pipes 8
Skills exchange Botswana 9
Renovating? Get a permit! 10
Get emergency ready! 11-14
Smoke & carbon monoxide detectors 15
Support for residents 16
Ending homelessness 17
Blue bin news 18
New street furniture 18
Recycling in apartments 19
Reducing packaging 19
Improving public housing 20
Live Green community grants 20
Libraries: job searches 21
Apartment inspections 21
TTC – arrival times online 22
High tech water meters 23
What's in a number? 23
Meeting seniors' needs 24-25
Your City can help 26
Youth Edge 27

Subscribe to City publications at toronto.ca/e-updates and follow the City on Twitter @ TorontoComms

Our Toronto

Building a great city – together

Our Toronto is distributed via Canada Post to every household in the city. Fully-accessible PDF and audio versions are also available on the City's website (**toronto.ca/ourtoronto**). You can read it online in the languages listed below, or contact us to have a printed copy in your language mailed to you. Call, write or e-mail to get a Braille or large print version mailed to you.

Vous trouverez ce journal en français au site web ci-dessous. (French)

在以下所示網站上有該報紙的中文版本。 (Chinese)

இந்தச் செய்தித்தாளின் தமிழ்ப் பிரதி பின்வரும் இணையத் தளத்தில் இடம்பெற்றுள்ளது. (Tamil)

Questo giornale è disponibile in italiano sul sito Web che segue. (Italian)

Este periódico está disponible en español en el sitio web indicado abajo. (Spanish)

Este jornal está disponível em português no sítio Web abaixo indicado. (Portuguese)

Makikita ang Tagalog na edisyon ng pahayagang ito sa website sa ibaba. (Tagalog)

یہ اخبار نیچے دی گئی ویب سائٹ پر اردو زبان میں دستیاب ہے۔ (Urdu)

Данная газета на русском языке имеется на нижеуказанном веб-сайте. (Russian)

این نشریه به انرس انترنتی ذیل به زبان فارسی قابل دسترسی میباشد. (Farsi)

이 신문은 아래의 웹 사이트에서 한국어로 보실 수 있습니다. (Korean)

toronto.ca/ourtoronto

Contact us
Our Toronto
City Hall
100 Queen Street West
7th Floor, West Tower
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
ourtoronto@toronto.ca
416-338-0338

Because we care
The printing of *Our Toronto* meets the highest environmental standards. The paper contains 100% recycled fibre and is printed using vegetable inks. Printing is done by a print shop that conforms to Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) requirements.

FSC Recycled

Toronto kicks off 175th anniversary celebrations in style

TORONTONIANS came out in droves to City Hall on Friday, March 6 to be entertained as the City launched year-long celebrations for its 175th anniversary.

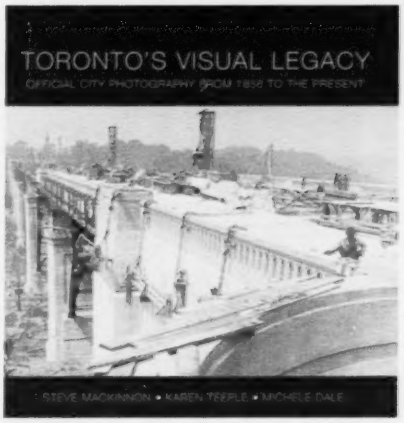
The free, day-long programming was as diverse as Toronto itself. It allowed people to look back in time at some of the building blocks that have made Toronto the great city it is today.

On Nathan Phillips Square, people listened to the songs of community choirs, watched an aboriginal smudging ceremony, and peered at emergency service vehicles from past and present.

There was a steady stream of activity inside as people toured the historic photos on the walls of the rotunda remembering years gone by, and purchased the commemorative book, *Toronto's Visual Legacy: Official City Photography from 1856 to the Present*. Others visited the Toronto Public Library branch to listen to poetry readings and share some memories during the Bohemian Embassy Revival.

The council chamber echoed with laughter during a series of plays, as school children and Toronto's first mayor, William Lyon Mackenzie (played by actor Eric Peterson) re-enacted the first council debate from 1834. Later that evening, Mackenzie and Mayor David Miller enjoyed some verbal jousting as they compared the challenges of managing Canada's largest city.

toronto.ca/175



Toronto and its photographic history. Enter our photo contest and you could win a copy of this book. See back page for details!

Crowds filled the rotunda of City Hall for the finale concert celebrating Toronto's 175th birthday on March 6, 2009.

Tabla player, Gurtej Hunjan (a.k.a conTEJus) fuses Indian classical with urban contemporary music for the audience at the City's 175th anniversary.

Message from Mayor David Miller

DURING times of economic uncertainty, people look to their governments to ensure that the public services they count on are protected and that those most affected by a downturn are supported.

Many families are suffering during this recession. People have lost jobs and others have had their work hours cut back. They are concerned about what lies ahead. They need to know that their City government is here to help them through this difficult period.

At the City of Toronto, we have a clear strategy to guide our success in the 21st century. This strategy was developed in partnership with business, labour and the academic community. It's called the Agenda for Prosperity and it's helping us do our best to keep people working.

The Agenda sets out four simple principles to guide the future of this city.

- First of all, City government must take an active lead in securing our collective prosperity. We call that Activist Toronto.
- Secondly, Toronto must be a city that recognizes its place in the world. We refer to that as Global Toronto.
- Thirdly, Toronto must be a city that makes use of its creative talent and energy in industries as diverse as design, food manufacturing and biotechnology to succeed economically. We must be a Creative Toronto.
- And, most of all, we must be a city that makes sure no one is left behind. We are One Toronto. We work together to find solutions to our collective challenges.

In this year's city budget, we have a number of measures to help people who need it most. These are all outlined on the City website at toronto.ca/torontohelps and in this issue of *Our Toronto*.

Your Toronto government has a long and proud history of city building and providing support to residents. Our food and nutrition programs for students; our welcome policy (which allows households with an annual income of less than $40,259 for a family of four to access recreation programs for free) and this year's TTC fare freeze are all examples of ways we're trying to support Torontonians.

At the same time, we recognize that investments must be made in our economic and environmental future. Council's long-term goal is to make business taxes competitive with those in surrounding municipalities. For the second year in a row, we have cut property taxes for small businesses and tenants in Toronto.

In addition to these important measures, the City is making critical investments that leverage funding from other orders of government and the private sector to secure our city's future. The results of this strategy can already be seen in the significant increase in TTC bus service – the biggest increase in the history of the Toronto Transit Commission in order to meet demand and create 900 jobs. And we've made new investments in public transit through our capital budget to bring 21st century Light Rail Transit to every neighbourhood in Toronto with our Transit City plan (transitcity.ca).

We're also making strong investments through our capital budget program to combat climate change and address the challenges resulting from severe weather events such as basement flooding. Our 10-year, $25-billion capital spending program will create and protect 300,000 jobs – 35,000 of them this year alone.

In the last recession, mistakes were made that left too many of our residents without help or hope. Today, the City of Toronto is doing its part to help preserve and create employment by investing in public and private infrastructure such as public transit, water works and the Mayor's Tower Renewal project – an initiative that will retrofit 1950s-era concrete slab apartment buildings to cut energy costs for residents while revitalizing their communities.

In this way, we are building a strong foundation for our future while creating green, sustainable jobs that will allow all Torontonians to succeed in the future.

Our city is the envy of the world. We have much to be proud of: our stable financial sector, our world stature universities and teaching hospitals and our innovative film, television and new media industries to name just a few. But, most of all, we can take pride in the way we come together to make sure that every Torontonian in every neighbourhood has real opportunity regardless of background or income.

That's our goal at the City of Toronto. And I know that Torontonians share in the goal of a prosperous, liveable city with opportunity for all. This issue of *Our Toronto* will provide further details of the efforts we're making – together with you – to create that great city.

Mayor David Miller's Annual **Community**
CLEAN-UP DAY
Get a group together on Saturday, April 25 and clean up a public area that is important to you. It could be a local street, park or riverbank. Register now at toronto.ca or call 416-392-7899.

Toronto's Budget reflects the role of City government and responds to economic outlook

THE City of Toronto passed the 2009 Operating Budget on March 31. The budget reflects the 24-hour/7-day role that City government plays in the protection of residents and provision of services. The City's Operating Budget is in addition to the Capital Budget program that Council approved last December, which will invest $25 billion in creating and protecting 35,000 jobs this year and more than 300,000 jobs over the next 10 years.

Local governments provide the services that have the most direct impact on a resident's quality of life. This is especially true as the City works to meet the challenges of the recession. The budget provides critical support to residents with tax help programs, city-building investments and funding to programming for job seekers, youth and seniors.

The Operating Budget also contains important new investments in many council priorities, including: transit, community health and wellness, customer service, civic engagement and combating climate change. The City has already frozen TTC fares and waste collection fees for 2009. To assist the housing market and construction sector during the economic downturn, the City has frozen development charges at current rates until January 31, 2011.

A residential property tax increase of 4% will mean an increase of $89 on a home with an assessed value of $387,680. A key part of the Operating Budget is the enhancement of programs that provide for the cancellation or deferral of property tax increases for low-income seniors and people with disabilities. For the Property Tax Increase Cancellation Program, the income threshold rises from $26,000 to $36,000 per year, and the assessment ceiling goes from $454,000 to $525,000. This means that the number of eligible households will increase 25%. The income threshold for the Property Tax Increase Deferral Program will increase from less than $40,000 to under $50,000. Eligible households will increase 32% over 2008. The City also has a water rate rebate for low-income seniors and people with disabilities. Details on how to make an application under these programs will be included with the final property tax bills and in the next edition of *Our Toronto*.

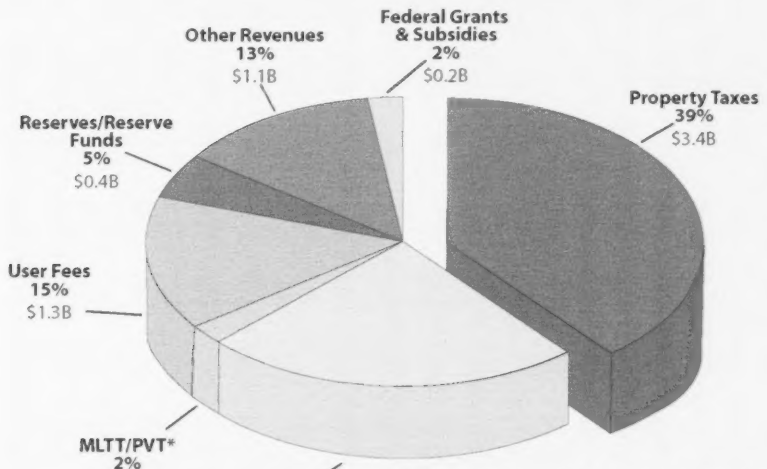
The continued reduction of business property taxes is part of Toronto City Council's plan to enhance Toronto's business climate and is in addition to specific programs that the City has to support business such as Tax Increment Equivalent Grants, the Better Building Partnership, Energy Reduction Loan Program and the Heritage Incentives Capital Grant and Tax Rebate Programs. The budget contains no rate increases to either the Municipal Land Transfer Tax (MLTT) or Personal Vehicle Tax (PVT).

The budget includes inflationary increases to user fees of approximately 3.7% for many programs that currently have a user fee to offset the cost of delivering a program or renting a facility. (For example, a 12 week adult aquatic pass is going up by $3.50, from $94.50 to $98.) User fees do not cover the full cost of providing programs.

The Operating Budget for 2009 totals $8.7 billion. 32% of the City's budget pays the costs of provincially required and cost-shared programs. 17% of the budget goes to providing residents and businesses with police, fire and emergency medical services and 16% of the total budget is dedicated to paying the part of transit not covered by TTC fare box revenue. 14% of the proposed budget is directed to the costs of other municipal services such as parks, forestry and recreation, libraries, road maintenance, snow removal, economic development, planning, and municipal licensing and standards.

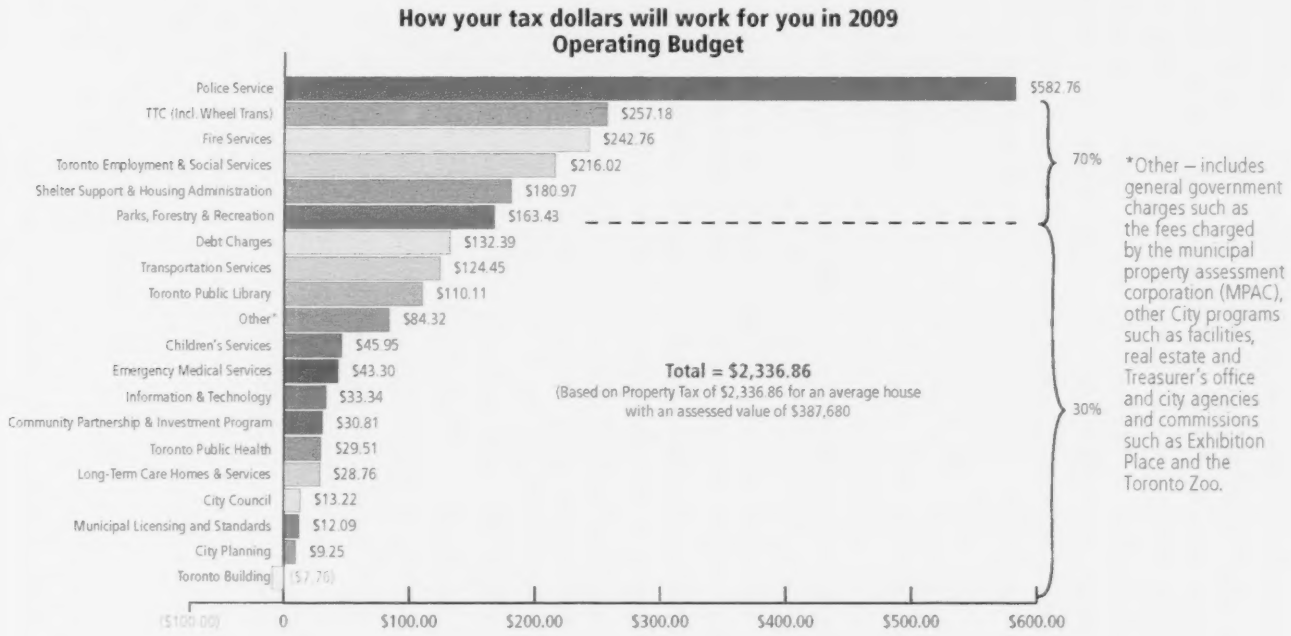
The City has both an Operating and Capital Budget. The day-to-day operation of City services is paid for from the City's Operating Budget (described above). This money is dedicated to salaries and operating expenses such as rent, fuel, electricity, equipment, etc. The delivery of City services such as police, fire,

Where the money comes from



Other revenues:
-rental of properties
-interest income
-investment income
-donations
-sale of recycled materials
-sale of other materials
-insurance loss recoveries
-tax registration certificates

*Municipal Land Transfer Tax/Personal Vehicle Tax


How your tax dollars will work for you in 2009
Operating Budget
Police Service $582.76
TTC (Incl. Wheel Trans) $257.18
Fire Services $242.76
Toronto Employment & Social Services $216.02
Shelter Support & Housing Administration $180.97
Parks, Forestry & Recreation $163.43
Debt Charges $132.39
Transportation Services $124.45
Toronto Public Library $110.11
Other* $84.32
Children's Services $45.95
Emergency Medical Services $43.30
Information & Technology $33.34
Community Partnership & Investment Program $30.81
Toronto Public Health $29.51
Long-Term Care Homes & Services $28.76
City Council $13.22
Municipal Licensing and Standards $12.09
City Planning $9.25
Toronto Building ($7.76)
Total = $2,336.86
(Based on Property Tax of $2,336.86 for an average house with an assessed value of $387,680
70%
30%
($100.00)
0
$100.00
$200.00
$300.00
$400.00
$500.00
$600.00
*Other – includes general government charges such as the fees charged by the municipal property assessment corporation (MPAC), other City programs such as facilities, real estate and Treasurer's office and city agencies and commissions such as Exhibition Place and the Toronto Zoo.

emergency medical services, TTC, libraries, parks and recreation, snow removal, roads maintenance, child care and many others are paid for through the City's Operating Budget.

The City is also rolling out its 10-year $25 billion capital plan that was approved last December. The City's Capital Budget pays for construction and maintenance of roads, the purchase of transit vehicles, the building of major facilities, and the purchase of major equipment. The Capital Budget funds the maintenance and construction of City assets and infrastructure, which are needed to support services to residents and businesses.

toronto.ca/budget2009

Toronto Employment and Social Services helps residents looking for work and financial support

WHILE Toronto Employment and Social Services provides financial and social support to Toronto residents, it also provides hands-on employment support through its Employment Resource Centres. The 14 offices are staffed by trained specialists to help Toronto's unemployed and under-employed residents. This includes assisting people who have been laid-off, as well as those who are already working but looking for a more stable or better job.

416-397-0330 – to apply for assistance
416-392-2956 – for general information about Employment & Social Services

Free services include job search support, computer access, career development workshops and job postings. Toronto residents are welcome to use the services available at any of the Employment Resource Centres, listed online at toronto.ca/socialservices.

Toronto Employment and Social Services also provide vital benefits and support to eligible people who are in financial need. "Our vision is to strengthen the social and economic well-being of Torontonians in their communities," says Heather MacVicar, General Manager.

"Every day we work hard to make that vision a reality."

Financial support, including help with food, shelter, clothing and other household costs, as well as a range of medical supplies and services, are also available.

Residents can apply for assistance by calling the Application Centre at 416-397-0330 or online at toronto.ca/socialservices. The web page also includes an eligibility estimator, which can help people determine if they can receive benefits, and important details about the City's employment services and financial benefits.

The web page also features the many initiatives that Employment and Social Services are involved in. The City is actively engaging employers and other partners to make sure that Toronto residents can connect with the opportunities and supports they need to help them through these difficult times.

toronto.ca/socialservices

125 years of public health: an infectious idea

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Item 837

While treatment in the early 20th century was usually reserved for children whose parents couldn't afford to go to a dentist, the checkups themselves were routine for all children in certain grades.

HAVE you ever wondered why you have to vaccinate your children if they go to school? Or why our milk must be pasteurized? Or why housing is seen as a measure of health? The answers to those questions can be found at an exhibit at the City of Toronto Archives, located on Spadina Road, just north of Dupont.

This exhibit presents a selection of archival photographs and documents from 1883 to the present, exploring themes such as health services for children, the struggle for clean water and air, and the development of public housing and social services.

The exhibit continues until the end of April. Group bookings can be made in advance. School groups are invited to take advantage of a learning program designed for grade 8 students. Other grade levels are welcome.

toronto.ca/archives
416-397-5000

Access to free dental care increases for low income youth and eligible seniors

AS part of the Ontario government's poverty reduction strategy, Toronto Public Health and other public health units across the province received additional funding to expand access to urgent and essential dental care for children in low-income families.

The City of Toronto Children in Need of Treatment program now provides emergency dental care to children 17 and under from low-income families. Previously, the eligibility age was birth to age 13.

"As a physician, I know that poor oral health reduces a person's quality of life," says Dr. David McKeown, Medical Officer of Health for the City of Toronto. "It can have a severe impact on a person's level of confidence, their ability to find employment, and to socialize."

In addition, untreated dental infections can contribute to chronic diseases such as cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses, and diabetes.

"Expansion of the Toronto Public Health dental program is particularly welcome in this time of economic uncertainty and rising unemployment," Dr. McKeown adds. "We can only predict that more and more parents will be unable to afford even basic dental care for their children. We are asking the provincial government to continue improving access to dental care for all age groups."

Toronto Public Health offers dental services to eligible children and seniors in over 30 languages, at 10 public health dental clinics and another four clinics within Community Health Centres.

Today, emergency dental care is provided to children of low-income families up to the age of 17.

toronto.ca/health
416-338-7600

Community Partnership and Investment Program

COMMUNITY Partnership and Investment Program (CPIP) is one of the ways the City partners with the community to ensure the diverse needs of Toronto's neighbourhoods and various communities are met. CPIP-funded activities contribute to the enhancement of the quality of life in Toronto through service delivery and community building. More than 900 organizations are engaged in supporting marginalized and at-risk communities. Safety, community services, recreation, AIDS and drug prevention, issues related to housing and homelessness, and student nutrition are just some of the many programs supported by CPIP.

City funding activities are guided by the principles of accessibility, fairness and equity, openness and transparency, accountability and responsiveness.

> In 2008, more than 100,000 volunteers helped deliver CPIP-funded services.

Each service area is linked to the City's Strategic Plan and addresses specific council priorities, including civic participation, strengthening neighbourhoods, improving business climate and increasing community capacity, equitable access and diversity. Community funding programs are also a strategic tool to achieve social, economic, and cultural goals. They promote flexibility of service delivery, capitalize on neighbourhood-specific program delivery models, contribute to the investment in the communities, increase tourism revenues, and allow organizations to leverage resources from other sources.

CPIP will invest $45 million (2009 budget) to ensure that a stable community services sector is able to work with, and for, communities to identify issues and respond with appropriate local, volunteer-driven programs and services. In 2008, more than 100,000 volunteers helped deliver CPIP-funded services.

Here are some examples of programs and services supported by the City:

St. Christopher House

- Services include adult literacy, children and youth programs, community development, elder abuse prevention program, adult drop-in, elderly persons' centre, meals on wheels, home help, client intervention, settlement services, summer day camp program and a drop-in program for homeless individuals.
- In 2007, 11,176 individuals were served by the organization.
- A total of $192,385 was approved in 2008 through Community Services Partnership for eight programs run by the organization.

Flemingdon Neighbourhood Services

- This organization serves clients living in the Toronto and East York, North York and Scarborough Community Council Districts, including priority neighbourhoods for investment.
- Services provided by the organization through their Housing Help projects include housing search assistance, help with subsidized housing, housing workshops for tenants and service providers, utility assistance, landlord outreach and housing stabilization help. Eviction prevention services include education, advocacy and referrals to the Rent Bank. Housing services also operate off-site across the area.
- In 2007, 1,500 clients were served by these projects.
- A total of $242,378 was approved in 2008 through the Homeless Initiatives Fund for these projects.

Philippine Women Centre of Ontario

- Provides services and programs that support and empower Filipino women to understand the roots of the barriers they face and achieve their rights in Canadian society.
- $10,000 approved in 2008 through the Access, Equity & Human Rights Partnership and Investment Program for a capacity building and advocacy project. The project is designed to:
  - Undertake community-based research on social inclusion and civic participation within the Filipino community.
  - Conduct anti-racism education workshops for women and youth to engage members in the public policy process.

Native Child and Family Services of Toronto

- Serves members of the native communities across the City of Toronto and offers protection services, treatment and healing programs, prevention services and youth services.
- $35,000 approved in 2008 through the Major Recreation Partnership Program for the Aboriginal Social Recreation Program. The program includes:
  - Co-ordination of all social recreation programs for native children and youth in the Scarborough area.
  - Traditional talking circles.
  - Recreational activities – swimming, drum socials, dance socials, for example.

toronto.ca/divisions/sda.htm

Toronto continues lead pipe replacement program

THE City continues to address the issues related to lead in tap water. Here's what residents need to know about lead pipes, who's at risk, and what the City has been doing to correct the problem.

Toronto has over 470,000 service connections (the pipe that runs from an underground watermain to a single-family home's property line) in its water supply system. These service connections are the responsibility of the City and approximately 60,000 are made of lead. In addition to the service connection, lead pipes from the property line into the home and within the home's plumbing system can also contain lead. These pipes are the responsibility of the homeowner.

Lead pipes are most common in homes built before the mid-1950s and are typically found in older parts of the city. Lead pipes can corrode as they age and leach lead into drinking water. Replacing lead pipes is the most effective way to eliminate potential risk. Homes built after the mid-1950s do not have lead pipes. Apartment buildings and condos, regardless of the age of the building, do not have lead pipes.

In 2007, Toronto City Council approved a program that will replace all City-owned lead service connections over a nine-year period. This program is one of the most aggressive of its kind in North America. Homeowners are encouraged to replace their lead pipes when the City is replacing the public portion. Changing the homeowner's pipes can cost approximately $1,800 to $3,000 depending on the property size and materials used. City contractors doing the replacements will contact residents shortly before starting the work in each neighbourhood.

A typical water service connection for single-family homes. In homes built before the mid-1950s, this pipe may be made of lead. The City-owned portion of lead water service connections will be replaced through the Lead Pipe Replacement Program; homeowners are encouraged to replace their portion to fully eliminate the risk of lead in their drinking water.

Until the replacement program is completed, simple flushing techniques can greatly reduce possible exposure to lead. To flush your taps, turn the cold water tap on until the water is cold, then let it continue to run for a least one minute. Residents in homes with lead pipes should do this BEFORE using the water for drinking or cooking. Boiling water does not remove lead. To conserve water, store drinking water in a pitcher in the fridge rather than flushing the taps multiple times a day. Other activities, such as showering and flushing toilets can minimize the need to flush the taps.

By itself, lead in drinking water rarely causes elevated lead levels in adults. However, children under the age of six and fetuses are vulnerable to the harmful effects of lead. If you have lead pipes, and you have children under six, in particular infants fed with formula made from tap water, or if you are pregnant, Toronto Public Health recommends taking the added precaution of using a filter certified by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) to remove lead. Look for the NSF-53 mark on the label when purchasing a filter.

LEAD testing

Residents living in older homes can call the Toronto Water Laboratory at 416-392-2894 to register for a free lead test. Once registered, callers will be directed to a Toronto Public Health office to pick up a special bottle and collection instructions. Upon return of the sample, the Toronto Water Laboratory will conduct the lead test and advise residents of their results.
The following Toronto Public Health offices have lead testing kits:

WEST Region

- Etobicoke Civic Centre, 4th floor 399 The West Mall, at Burnhamthorpe Road

NORTH Region

- North York Civic Centre, 2nd floor 5100 Yonge Street, north of Sheppard Avenue

EAST Region

- 1530 Markham Road, 5th floorat Milner Avenue, north of Hwy. 401

SOUTH Region

- 2340 Dundas Street West, main floor near Dundas West subway station; area known as The Crossways
- 44 Victoria Street, 18th Floor Adelaide Street, north of King Street
- East York Civic Centre, main floor 850 Coxwell Avenue, at Mortimer Avenue

toronto.ca/water
toronto.ca/health/lead

Toronto/Botswana AIDS Partnership supports young people

BOTSWANA has one of the highest HIV/AIDS infection rates in the world. Toronto Public Health (TPH), on behalf of the City, is leading an exchange of skills and expertise in fighting the ravages of this disease. TPH has also been building partnerships with non-profit agencies to respond to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. For example, Casey House provided mentoring and training on palliative care and support for people in the last stages of AIDS to Home Based Care staff in Botswana.

The partnership is now focused primarily on youth engagement. Educational, cultural and recreational initiatives targeting youth have proven highly successful in HIV/AIDS prevention. Young people in Botswana particularly enjoy playing soccer, so the City and the South East District Council, in partnership with Commonwealth Games Canada and the Mathare Youth Sports Association in Kenya, established a youth-led Kicking AIDS Out initiative (now known as the South East District Youth Empowerment League, or SEDYEL). A new youth centre has opened in the South East District of Botswana and 100 teams have now been established – 27 of which are girls' teams (a first for Botswana!). An estimated 2,000 children and youth from all villages in the district are participating in SEDYEL activities.

Councillor Kyle Rae opened the much anticipated youth centre, which was funded primarily through the City of Toronto Global AIDS Fund. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) provided funding so that the councillor and staff from TPH – Barbara Emanuel and Liz Janzen – could be on hand for the official opening and celebration. An estimated 300 people turned out for the occasion.

Attending the official opening of the youth centre were Councillor Kyle Rae (third from right), Liz Janzen (fifth from left) and Barb Emanuel (second from left) from Toronto Public Health.

"Toronto's compassion, caring and generosity have built a foundation of hope for the future," says Councillor Rae. "Creating a safe space for youth to play soccer and learn about HIV/AIDS prevention is a legacy Toronto can be very proud of establishing in rural Botswana."

While violence prevention was never identified as a specific goal of the partnership, anecdotal evidence indicates a marked decrease in youth violence as a result of SEDYEL. Now, former gang members are in leadership positions. A high percentage of the district's youth are also involved in the football league as coaches, referees, players, peer educators and theatre performers.

toronto.ca/health/botswana_index.htm

Toronto contributed to the new youth centre, which opened in October 2008.

Renovating your home Be safe – get a permit!

Why do I need a building permit?
A building permit helps to make sure that any structural change to your home is safe. As part of the building permit process, Toronto Building staff must review your plans to ensure they comply with provincial and municipal safety/building codes and bylaws. Often, plan examiners and inspectors can offer suggestions to help you solve or avoid construction problems. Last year, the City issued 34,456 building permits.

How long does it take to get a building permit?
The City of Toronto offers a Residential FASTRACK review service. This service is intended to provide a faster review service. For smaller, less complex construction projects, our goal is to issue your permit while you wait. In some circumstances, it may take up to five days to complete the review.

How much does a building permit cost?
The cost to get a building permit depends on the type of construction proposal. For example, the permit fee for a single family home is currently $14.46 per square metre of floor area.

When do I need a building permit?
You will need a building permit if you plan to:

- Construct a new building
- Renovate, repair or add to an existing building
- Demolish or remove all or a portion of a building
- Change the use of a building
- Install, change, or remove partitions and load bearing walls
- Make new openings for, or change the size of, doors and windows
- Build a garage, balcony or deck
- Excavate a basement or construct a foundation
- Install or modify heating, plumbing or air-conditioning systems
- Install or reconstruct chimneys or fireplaces

In many cases your designer or contractor will obtain permits on your behalf; however, as the building owner you are ultimately responsible for complying with all building permit requirements.

Toronto and East York District
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. W.
416-392-7539

North York District
North York Civic Centre
5100 Yonge St.
416-395-7000

Etobicoke York District
Etobicoke Civic Centre
2 Civic Centre Ct.
416-394-8002

Scarborough District
Scarborough Civic Centre
150 Borough Dr.
416-396-7526

toronto.ca/building

Handgun ban update

As of March 31, 71,522 people have signed the on-line petition to ban handguns across Canada.

toronto.ca/handgunban

Get emergency ready

Pull out these pages and save them

Preparedness...it's everybody's business

EMERGENCIES are not planned, but we can plan what to do when they happen. The City's Emergency Services work closely with City emergency planners to prepare for emergencies. While the City is prepared to assist residents in an emergency, residents also need to help themselves by being well prepared.

An emergency may result from an existing danger or it may be a threat of an impending situation affecting property or the health, safety and welfare of the community. Sometimes we have some warning that bad weather is on the way and have time to prepare, but most often an emergency happens with no notice.

The potential threats that we face in Toronto range from natural hazards such as severe weather, flooding and winter storms to major fires or a major incident that interrupts our normal lives. Last summer, the city had two major fires that forced residents from their homes for extended periods of time.

Some basic planning can help you be prepared when an emergency happens.

Please take some time to review this information and take the time to be prepared.

PROTECT YOURSELF

Homeowners AND renters should have insurance.

Home insurance can protect you and your family by helping to replace or repair property damaged during a major incident, such as a fire or an explosion. If you have bought the coverage, home insurance may also pay for water damage caused by a sewer backing up into your house or basement apartment. And if the damage forces you to leave your house or apartment while it is being repaired, insurance may also pay for your additional living expenses while you stay somewhere else.

The City responds to emergencies by dealing with the immediate dangers that threaten life and property, such as fire or flood, by providing emergency medical care, instructing and assisting residents with evacuation procedures, and finding temporary emergency shelter. The City does not pay for the cost of replacing or repairing personal property, nor does the City provide long-term accommodation while a home is being repaired or rebuilt.

Understanding just how much insurance you need is the first step to finding coverage that is right for you. To help keep track of your personal belongings, the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) provides free home-inventory software called *Know Your Stuff.* Visit www.ibc.ca to download your free copy.

There are many different kinds of insurance coverage for renters and homeowners. Be sure to discuss your needs with an insurance professional.

It's all about planning:

Everyone needs to develop a plan to be prepared in the event of an emergency or disaster. At a minimum, you should have an emergency kit that includes enough food, water and supplies to last at least 72 hours. Remember, you may need to look after your own needs as well as those of your family during an emergency.

You need to take into consideration that a highway spill of hazardous chemicals or a gas leak could mean instant evacuation or being stranded for hours. A winter storm could confine your family to your home or make it impossible to get home. A flood, fire or power failure could cut off basic services – gas, water, electricity and telephones. Sometimes interruptions can be brief but being prepared for a longer outage is important.

Assemble an emergency kit and make sure everyone in your family knows where it is.

Keep enough water and non-perishable food to meet your needs for at least 3 days. Check the food regularly and replace the water every year.

Other considerations

- Have basic supplies and tools, first aid and clothing.
- Think about special needs for infants, adults and seniors.
- Make copies of all your important documents – insurance, ownership papers and prescriptions.
- Keep a minimum one-week supply of medications in your emergency kit.

Important documents

- Bank account numbers, wills, insurance policies
- Credit card account numbers and companies
- Health Card and Social Insurance Numbers
- Passports, immunization records
- Family records, such as birth, marriage and death certificates
- Important telephone numbers
- Inventory of valuable household goods
- Photos of family members in case you get separated
- Copies of your important documents in a waterproof container
- Extra keys, a small amount of cash and cheque books

To get real time updates from the City during an emergency - subscribe to the Emergency Alert and Information e-update service at toronto.ca/e-updates. Your e-mail address remains confidential. Follow 'TorontoComms' on Twitter. During an emergency, notices will be sent to all subscribers.

Your Emergency Kit

Food and water

- At least three litres of bottled water per person, per day
- Canned food: soups, stews, beans, pastas, meat, poultry, fish, fruits and vegetables
- Energy bars and dried foods
- Honey, peanut butter, nuts, syrup, jams, salt and pepper, sugar, instant coffee and tea
- Comfort/stress foods such as cookies and hard candy
- Food for infants, seniors or people on special diets

Medications:

- Make copies of all your prescriptions and keep a minimum one-week supply of medications in your kit.

Dos and Don'ts during an emergency

DO stay tuned to the radio and television.
DO follow the instructions of emergency officials. For example, if an evacuation is called, remember your personal safety is the most important thing.
DO call family and let them know where you are, and that you are safe.
DO call for assistance if there is a need to move someone immediately and you are unable to do so.
DO stay inside your home, if it is safe to do so, unless otherwise directed.
DO try to ensure, wherever possible without putting yourself at risk, that your immediate neighbours are safe.
DO keep your cell phone battery charger close by and recharge whenever possible.
DON'T tie up the telephone lines. Emergency officials need those lines to conduct business.
DON'T venture out, unless directed by emergency officials. Stay inside where it is warm and you have supplies.
DON'T attempt to bring your children home from school or daycare in an emergency or evacuation. School officials will be notified of an emergency and they will begin proper procedures to protect the children in their care. You will be notified of when you can be reunited with your children.

For more information
City of Toronto website: toronto.ca
Office of Emergency Management: toronto.ca/oem
Weather Warnings for Canada: weatheroffice.gc.ca/warnings/warnings_e.html

Non-Emergency Phone Numbers:
Fire: 416-338-9050 Police: 416-808-2222 Toronto Hydro Customer Info: 416-542-8000

REMEMBER

During an emergency, things can change. Conditions at the site of the emergency can often change in an instant and the information available to emergency responders can also change depending on the circumstances of the emergency. The City wants to help everyone be safe and sometimes this may mean not being in your home. The patience and understanding of residents until an area is made safe for residents to return is appreciated.

Safety is everyone's responsibility. Follow the directions of City of Toronto emergency staff.

Recovering from an emergency can take time. Some people require special help in dealing with what they went through during an emergency and others may be out of their homes for a long period while things are repaired or rebuilt. The point is that recovery is something that we have to allow to happen over a period of time – it is rarely instant. Recovering from an emergency will often involve the work of many agencies all being coordinated to assist residents. The coordination of recovery efforts is important and can take time to be fully up and running after an emergency. Helping each other as good neighbours and lending a hand wherever we can is a good way to make recovery easier. The City can work with a community and help recovery take place over time.

If you are hearing or visually impaired, have special medical needs, require personal attendant care or use life-sustaining equipment:

Here are some important tips to consider in your preparations:

- Arrange in advance for someone to check on you
- Wear a MedicAlert bracelet or carry an identification card
- Carry a personal alarm that can draw attention to your whereabouts
- Label your equipment and attach instructions
- Keep medicines, supplies and special equipment in your emergency kit and include information about special needs and foods

toronto.ca/oem

POWER OUTAGE TIPS

Although Toronto Hydro-Electric System Limited proactively maintains and upgrades its electrical equipment, occasional power outages are an unavoidable aspect of electricity distribution in the City of Toronto. There are, however, steps you can take before and during an outage to ease the stress of the situation.

Before an outage:

- Assemble an emergency kit with a flashlight, portable radio, battery-operated clock, batteries, matches, candles, bottled water and ready-to-eat foods;
- Ensure you have a cell phone or a hard wire, single-line telephone. Cordless phones will not work without electricity;
- Keep Toronto Hydro-Electric System's Lights Out number (416-542-8000) near your phone with a list of emergency numbers.

During an outage:

- Listen to the radio for updates, but if the indoor temperature gets too chilly, go to a heated shelter.
- Don't open the freezer. If undisturbed, food can remain frozen for up to two days. Once thawed, cook before refreezing. Food in the fridge should last up to eight hours, but if in doubt throw it out!
- If using lamps or appliances when the power goes out, turn them off to avoid possible damage when the power comes back on. This includes electronics and motor-driven equipment.

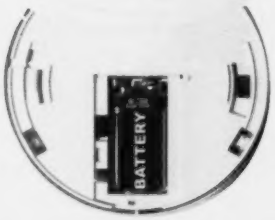
For more information about power outages, visit torontohydro.com/poweroutage

AVOID FROZEN AND BURST WATER PIPES

The spring and summer months are the best time to inspect your home and be sure it is ready for next winter. If there is a lengthy power outage the temperatures inside your home can drop below freezing. If you have water pipes near exterior walls that are not properly insulated, they can freeze or burst. If you know that water pipes run along outside walls, have the problem repaired before next winter. If there is a lengthy power outage, the best way to avoid freezing pipes is turn a tap on at both the highest AND lowest point in your home - let the water run at a very low rate - this will keep your pipes from freezing.

toronto.ca/fire/prevention/frozen_water_pipes.htm

Install Smoke Alarms It's the law!



Check it often; put new batteries in every year; replace the detector every 10 years

MOST fatal fires occur at night when people are asleep. Often, victims never wake up. A working smoke alarm will detect smoke and sound an alarm to alert you, giving you precious time to escape. The Ontario Fire Code requires every home to have a working smoke alarm on every floor and outside all sleeping areas.

Homeowners

It is the responsibility of homeowners to install and maintain smoke alarms on every storey of their home and outside all sleeping areas.

Landlords

It is the responsibility of landlords to ensure their rental properties comply with the law.

Tenants

If you are a tenant of a rental property, and do not have the required number of smoke alarms, contact your landlord immediately.

It is against the law for tenants to remove the batteries or tamper with the smoke alarm in any way.

Remember

- Install smoke alarms on the ceiling of every floor of your home and outside sleeping areas.
- Test your smoke alarms regularly by pressing the test button.
- Change the battery in each smoke alarm at least once every year.
- Smoke alarms don't last forever. Replace smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old.

When installing, testing and maintaining smoke alarms, make sure you follow the manufacturer's instructions.

toronto.ca/fire/prevention/smoke_alarms.htm

Carbon monoxide – the silent killer

HELP prevent carbon monoxide hazards in your home:

- Have a qualified heating contractor perform a yearly maintenance check of your furnace and venting system, as well as fireplaces, chimneys and all fuel-burning appliances.
- Equip your home with a CO alarm that has the Canadian Standards Association 'Blue flame' symbol and references CSA 6.19-01. This latest Canadian standard lets you know the alarm complies with recognized safety requirements.
- Install at least one CO alarm at knee height near the bedrooms. Use more than one CO alarm if sleeping areas are located on different levels of your home.

Remember to follow the manufacturer's directions for installing and maintaining your CO alarm.

Carbon monoxide alarms are required by City bylaw:

A minimum of one carbon monoxide detector shall be installed in each of the following dwelling units:

A. Each residence that has a fuel-burning appliance (a furnace, a fireplace or wood-burning stove, for example)

B. For a building that has multiple occupancies, each residence located on the same floor as a fuel-burning appliance

C. For a building with multiple occupancies, each unit on the two floors above a fuel-burning appliance.

If you have any fuel-burning appliances, carbon monoxide detectors are essential.

toronto.ca/fire/prevention/carbon.htm

Install a carbon monoxide alarm at knee height and on every level where people sleep.

A new approach for Employment and Social Services

NOVEMBER 2008 marked the end of a busy year for Toronto Employment and Social Services. The division changed its name, released a pivotal report, and launched a new web page and online application.

These changes are the start of a new approach to employment and social service delivery in Toronto.

"First of all, we feel our name now better reflects the work that we do," says Heather MacVicar, General Manager of the division formerly known as Toronto Social Services. "After all, our employment services play a big role in how we strengthen the social and economic well-being of Torontonians in their communities."

A press conference was held in November to announce the name change and to release Toronto Employment and Social Services' latest report, *Starting in the Right Place*.

The report sets out a service delivery system that "responds to the needs of Torontonians, removes barriers and creates opportunities for success," said Mayor David Miller. "Starting in the Right Place is about providing residents with a number of ways to reach a client-centred, community-focused service system—a system that also actively engages employers."

The report can be found on Toronto Employment and Social Services' redesigned web page.

The web page was developed in consultation with service users and community agencies, and provides Torontonians with quick and easy access to information about the many programs and services offered. By visiting the site, Toronto residents will learn about upcoming career fairs and workshops. The web page provides links and information about online employment resources. Employers can benefit from visiting the website to find out how they can get help with their hiring needs.

Toronto Employment and Social Services: starting in the right place.

The web page also offers Canada's first fully integrated online application for social assistance. WAYS (Web Access to Your Services) allows people to quickly estimate if they may qualify for social assistance and then apply online.

"We're very excited about the direction that we're taking," says MacVicar. "We're making sure that the employment, financial and social supports we provide are helping to build a stronger Toronto."

toronto.ca/socialservices

Toronto: then and now

Yonge Street looking south at York Mills

YONGE Street was only two lanes wide when North York was a township in 1936. The TTC ran a streetcar up the west side of Yonge Street. The subway was extended to York Mills in 1973. On the east side of Yonge, the Jolly Miller Hotel (later a tavern) continues to welcome generations of Torontonians.

toronto.ca/archives

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1568, Item 137
1936

2008

Ending homelessness in Toronto, one person at a time

STREETS to Homes, the award-winning, made-in-Toronto program, has helped more than 2,200 homeless people find permanent housing since its start in early 2005. Thanks to home visits from follow-up workers who provide much needed support, more than 91 per cent of those helped are still housed.

Clients say that housing has changed their lives: they feel better and the future looks brighter. They also report using less alcohol and other drugs. James, a Streets to Homes client who moved into his apartment three years ago, after nine years on the streets, said: "Housing is the reason I'm not doing crack anymore. It's the reason I'm moving forward to a better life." Homeless and living in a ravine for six years after schizophrenia derailed a "normal" life of renting apartments, buying cars and studying at Ryerson, Anthony said shortly after his recent move into a highrise apartment: "I am only starting to see how brutally I was living. Even out there I had great ambition and great plans. Now I realize no matter how busy my schedule, it was never going to amount to anything. The schedule requires a foundation. A place to live."

Clients say that housing has changed their lives: they feel better and the future looks brighter.

With almost four years of street presence under their belts, it is likely that staff from Streets to Homes have engaged with just about every homeless person you might see during the course of your day. Since last summer, staff have been offering service to all street-involved people, not just those who sleep on the streets and in the parks and ravines. Front-line workers, including street outreach and counsellors, are now working more shifts (including 24-hour street outreach downtown in winter and summer, and mobile service to all areas of the city).

"These are among the most vulnerable people in our city," says Phil Brown, General Manager of Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, the City division with responsibility for the social housing portfolio as well as emergency shelters and other services for homeless people.

toronto.ca/housing

A Streets to Homes staff member provides outreach to a homeless person in an effort to get him to accept assistance.

On April 15, Toronto volunteers took action to end homelessness

More than 1,000 volunteers took to the streets and emergency shelters on the evening of April 15 to conduct the second Street Needs Assessment, a 10-question survey of homeless people that will help to improve the services the City funds and delivers to this vulnerable group. "I was amazed at the cross-section of Torontonians who offered up an evening," said one volunteer. "Young, old; women, men; vulnerable, confident. All folks who care." When she volunteered in March, one person wrote about her fellow volunteers on the Street Needs Assessment Facebook page: "a tremendous city wide group of people...with big hearts who have a listening ear to the concerns and needs of the homeless. Way to go for Toronto!" Survey results will be reported within a few months.

The Blue Bin Program is growing

New items to toss in!

THE City's Blue Bin Program now includes plastic retail and grocery bags and foam polystyrene packaging.

Plastic retail and grocery store bags without drawstrings, metal detailing or hard plastic handles can now be tossed into your Blue Bin. Receipts must be removed and plastic bags should be put in one bag with the handles tied together.

The following bags are not included in the program: dry cleaning, milk (outer and inner), produce, bread, sandwich and plastic food wrap.

Foam polystyrene packaging includes foam protective packaging, foam meat trays, foam take-out food containers, foam plates, foam egg cartons and foam coffee cups. All food residue must be removed. Packing chips (e.g. peanuts), and pure solid polystyrene, which is a hard plastic with limited flexibility used in plates, glasses, cutlery, clear clamshells, clear egg cartons, plastic models, CD and DVD cases, are not accepted in the Blue Bin Program at this time.

toronto.ca/garbage

New street furniture rolls out onto Toronto's streets

THE City of Toronto is ushering in a new era in the beautification of the city with the introduction of the City's co-ordinated street furniture program.

Street furniture includes transit shelters, litter/recycling receptacles, benches, postering and information kiosks, publication box structures, public washrooms and bicycle parking units. The matching street furniture will reduce visual clutter and change the look and feel of Toronto's streetscapes.

Installation began in June 2008 with the successful rollout of more than 275 new style transit shelters. New benches, postering boards and litter receptacles are now being installed. The furniture is high quality in both design and materials, and for the first time, Toronto will have street furniture elements that have been designed to work together. By following the "Vibrant Streets" placement guidelines, the street furniture is being installed on the city's sidewalks and boulevards in a manner that respects the needs of pedestrians and users of all types.

Astral Media Inc. was awarded the contract to build and maintain the equipment. Over the next 20 years, it is expected that nearly 26,000 street furniture elements will be provided during the term of this program. Prior to awarding the contract, the City engaged in an extensive public consultation process, (including the design community, potential bidders, and public space and accessibility advocates) where the public indicated that design and functionality were most important in the development of the program.

toronto.ca/streetfurniture

Apartments and condominiums – increasing their waste diversion

TORONTO has approximately 4,500 multi-residential buildings with more than 500,000 residences. They account for one-half of the city's households but they only recycle about 13 per cent of their waste. In order to reach our 70 per cent diversion goal, people living in apartments and condos need to be part of the Green Bin Program and by 2011, they will be.

The City's Green Bin rollout will bring 300 buildings into the program each month over the next 18 months. Through building owners, the City is providing each unit a Green Bin information package and an indoor kitchen compost container, the same type that single households received.

To help residents increase Blue Bin recycling, the City is also providing new in-unit recycling containers for building owners to give to residents. Owners are being given a choice between two different recycling containers: a soft-sided bag or a hard-sided bin. These new recycling containers will be delivered to buildings over the next 12 months.

City staff have been working with building owners and management to help them set up a collection system that will work in their building for both the Green Bin and Blue Bin Programs. Some newer buildings have chutes with tri-sorters, but most buildings require residents to take their recycling and composting to a central waste/recycling area. The City provides a selection of different information pieces in many languages to help building owners communicate with residents about these programs.

toronto.ca/garbage

By 2011, apartments and condominiums will all be recycling their organics.

Toronto takes action to reduce packaging

ON December 2, 2008, Toronto City Council voted to reduce retail in-store packaging and to make sure that the materials used in packaging are recyclable in the City's Blue Bin Program.

Starting June 1, 2009, retailers must charge their customers five cents for each plastic shopping bag. Retailers may provide a free alternative (eg., a box) to their customers. A number of grocery stores, such as Food Basics, No Frills and Price Chopper, use a fee-per-use charge. This fee over time has resulted in a major reduction of the number of plastic bags distributed through these stores. The five cent fee per bag is not remitted to the City of Toronto.

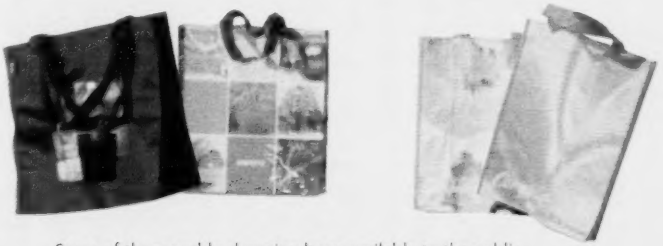
Nick Jennery, president and CEO of the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors, said big grocery stores won't be pocketing the cash. "Any money that is collected will be reinvested in the business, such as new product bag development," he said. "We aren't in the business of collecting funds. We are in the business of changing consumer behaviour and we know this tool works."

All shopping bags must be compatible with the City's recycling system by June 1, 2010 and the grocery industry has said that it will cut its use of plastic bags 70 per cent by 2012.

Plastic take-out food containers that are not compatible with the City's Blue Bin Program will be banned beginning February 28, 2011.

City staff are also meeting with industry stakeholders to explore possible ways to make hot drink cups and lids compatible with the Blue Bin program in Toronto, and reports will be heard by the City's Public Works and Infrastructure Committee in June 2009.

toronto.ca/garbage/packaging_reduction.htm



Some of the reusable shopping bags available to the public.

Better places to live: Toronto makes historic investment in public housing

TORONTO is committed to making sure all people have a safe and decent place to call home. The City is supporting that goal in 2008-2009 by investing $75 million from the sale of Toronto Hydro Telecom to repair public housing units at Toronto Community Housing. It's the City's biggest public housing repair investment in history.

The funding, combined with $36.5 million in funding from the Ontario government, will allow Toronto Community Housing to refurbish thousands of housing units to make them more liveable for tenants. The focus is on kitchens and bathrooms, which are most in need of repair.

Work is already well underway. In 2008, 2,598 kitchens and 2,042 bathrooms in 3,500 units were replaced. In 2009, another 2,500 kitchens and 1,500 bathrooms in 3,200 units will be revamped.

The work also supports the City's green efforts. Where possible, kitchen and bathroom upgrades will feature sustainable products like made-in-Ontario FSC-approved wood products, Energy Star appliances, energy-efficient lighting, recycled paint, biodegradable ceramic tiles, low-formaldehyde countertops, and low-flow toilets, taps, faucets and showerheads.

Over $100 million in repairs to Toronto Community Housing units.

The funding will also allow Toronto Community Housing to retrofit 10 buildings with new energy efficient building systems. This will improve the buildings' long-term sustainability, key to improving quality of life for tenants. These efforts will also reduce water and energy use and help reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

Housing repair investments have the important benefit of creating direct and indirect jobs for Toronto's economy. The multiplier effect of this economic stimulus is greater than any other type of infrastructure investment, and its impact would benefit from additional investments by other orders of government.

torontohousing.ca/investing_buildings/building_improvements

Funds spread the *'Live Green'* message

5TH ANNUAL
GREEN TORONTO AWARDS
THE CITY OF TORONTO'S ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE
Come & Celebrate
Thursday April 23, 2009 | 7pm | Free
Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place
www.toronto.ca/greentorontoawards

Livegreen Toronto

LIVE GREEN Toronto funding to help neighbourhood and community groups take action on climate change increased to $2.2 million this year. The funds support grassroots initiatives that reduce the emissions contributing to climate change and are an important component of the Live Green Toronto program. In 2008, 14 community groups were awarded almost $700,000 for projects that will increase renewable energy use, local food production, green roofs and more.

One of the recipients from 2008 is Greenest City. Their project, "From the Ground Up," offers Parkdale residents the capacity, support and space needed to produce locally-grown food. The initiative will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create green "urban farmer" jobs for 12 at-risk youth.

Another project, "Cycling – From Back Home to our New Home," will promote cycling as a viable means of transportation and foster the continuation of sustainable transportation habits to newcomers as they integrate and adapt to Canadian society.

Live Green Toronto also offers residents a website with information to help them live green, and provides expert advice to help neighbourhood and community groups get organized and take action.

Community and neighbourhood groups with ideas for projects to help make Toronto greener are encouraged to apply for Live Green Toronto funding. The first round of 2009 funding applications began on February 2, and the second begins on July 3.

livegreentoronto.ca

Libraries: a good place to start a job search

WHEN 33-year-old Terry came to Toronto last spring from his home in Ukraine, he found himself homeless within a few weeks. But, as Terry said in October, "I never considered staying homeless for a long time."

Terry used the Toronto Reference Library as a base to do the research necessary to set up his now-successful Internet business; in particular, Terry availed himself of the free Internet access available at all 99 Toronto Public Library branches.

But free Internet access is just the beginning when it comes to employment-related resources at the library.

"The library offers free workshops on resumé writing, online job hunting, and accreditation for newcomers, among other topics," says library manager Greg Kelner. "We also have books on a wide range of topics, and extensive online resources."

Among the library's online resources is Career Bookmarks, a free online gateway to career and job search information. Career Bookmarks provides tools, databases, articles and more for job seekers and career explorers at all levels. Organized under six topics – Strategies, Self Assessment, Career Choices, Market Yourself, Jobs, and Success on the Job – the site is easy to navigate and features content for all aspects of career development.

"The library has so much to offer to help people with their employment-related needs," says library manager Phyllis Jacklin. "Newcomers to Canada, for example, can make a free, 30-minute appointment to meet with Toronto Reference or North York Central library staff to explore topics such as job searching or accreditation."

torontopubliclibrary.ca
416-393-7131

The Municipal Licensing and Standards' Mobile Community Office provides a place for residents to discuss concerns during the building audit.

Apartment building inspections increase

ON December 1, 2008, the Building Audit Team hit the streets to increase enforcement at apartment buildings that are in disrepair. This team makes sure that apartment buildings are properly maintained and that Toronto's housing stock remains safe and liveable for residents in the long term. The program is designed to inspect all apartment buildings over time.

The enforcement team has 15 members. They will audit 176 buildings in the first year. In each ward, two buildings will be chosen in consultation with the local councillor and another two based on staff knowledge and experience. Privately and publicly-owned buildings are included in the audits.

The building audits focus mainly on common areas: parking garages, balconies, exterior grounds, electrical, hot water and heating systems. A random sample of units within the building is also inspected, with the occupant's permission.

Residents are advised before the team arrives at their building. The team sets up a mobile office on site so that building residents can bring forward any of their concerns that have gone unaddressed by landlords.

Visit the City's website to see if your building will be audited, or to view inspection results and orders issued. If your building is not immediately part of this program, you can still contact your district Municipal Licensing and Standards office about concerns that have gone unaddressed by the property owner.

buildingauditteam@toronto.ca
toronto.ca/licensing/mrab.htm
416-396-7228

Up-to-the-minute arrival information coming to a platform – and cellphone – near you

Putting information in the hands of TTC riders

WITH service improvements well underway for 2009 – more buses, more routes, less waiting – the Toronto Transit Commission is poised to make customers' experience using the TTC even better this year.

TTC customers with Internet access, BlackBerrys, PDAs, or cell phones, will be able to get critical up-to-date information from the TTC about service disruptions, route diversions and information about when their next bus, streetcar or subway train will be arriving. Add to that a web feature called trip planning. It will allow anyone with Internet access to plot and plan their TTC trip from point A to B, and how long they can expect that trip to take.

While the TTC's focus remains on ensuring safe, reliable service for its approximately 1.6 million daily riders, the TTC also recognizes that customers want to interact more with the TTC. Information about when the next bus or streetcar is due to arrive – using GPS on board all surface vehicles – will greatly enhance the TTC experience for riders. Before leaving from home, for example, a TTC customer will be able to go online and see precisely where, on its route, the next vehicle is located – in real time.

Last fall, the TTC launched a pilot project at Dundas station that displays when the next subway train is due to arrive. Using the platform video screens on subway platforms, next train arrival information provides riders with crucial information, especially when an unforeseen delay on the system occurs. In 2009, screens will be installed throughout the entire subway system, providing customers with next train arrival information on every platform.

Throughout 2009, subway mezzanines, bus platforms and select bus and streetcar stops across the TTC network will be outfitted with next vehicle arrival information signs. The LCD and LED signs will provide up-to-the-minute next vehicle arrival information. Additional features will allow customers to use SMS text messaging for information about next vehicle arrival information on all TTC surface routes. The final project roll-out will include a unique identifier for each vehicle stop to allow customers to obtain specific stop information via wireless technologies (i.e. Internet and/or SMS text messaging).

Last August, the TTC launched its new website, redesigned to be more accessible and more user friendly. Enhancements to the website began with the introduction of subway service disruption notices in November 2007. While content and new sections continue to be added, the site is set up for future applications, such as self-serve trip planning and the purchasing of passes using debit or credit cards. This year, the TTC's website will allow customers to subscribe to email alerts for disruption notifications, route diversions and special events. By subscribing online with your e-mail address, the system will automatically send a message to your e-mail address when there are major disruptions to service – either planned or unforeseen. Special events, like Nuit Blanche, often mean enhanced TTC services for Torontonians. E-alerts will keep customers apprised of upcoming special service.

One of the most anticipated features in the works is the web-based trip planning application. Scheduled to be online this summer, it will give TTC users a self-serve means of planning their transit trips using routing information, timing points and walking distances, available 24/7.

Public transit in Toronto is the thread that binds this city. Using technology to keep its customers informed will help make the TTC experience an even better one.

ttc.ca

Toronto's water meters go high-tech

WaterMeter PROGRAM

THIS year, the City of Toronto will begin installing an automated water meter reading system throughout the city. The new meters transmit water meter readings directly to data collection units across the city, which are then transmitted to a central database. The majority of water meters in use across the city are near the end of their lifespan. This new program allows the City to replace the old meters with more efficient and up-to-date technology.

There are a number of benefits to using an automated meter reading system. They will increase the City's water conservation efforts as residents become more aware of their water consumption. The new system will provide equitable service, where everyone is charged in the same way. The new meters will also allow the City to better detect water loss in the system, such as leaks, pipe breaks and open hydrants, resulting in faster response times. Finally, the new meters eliminate the need for City staff to go to homes to take readings.

This mandatory program will be rolled out ward-by-ward beginning with residents who are currently on a flat-rate system. It is expected to take six years to complete the city-wide replacement of 465,000 meters. Toronto Water is working to deliver one of the largest projects the City has ever undertaken. More information will be available on the City's website in the coming months.

toronto.ca/water

Book your Summer WaterSaver Visit now!

Registration for Summer Water Saver Visits is now open. Learn how to reduce your outdoor water use to save you money. Residents can get a FREE lawn and garden assessment by a landscape advisor. Visits take place from May to August and spaces are filling fast.

savewater@toronto.ca
416-392-7000

What's in a number?

Coming in June

411, 911, 211, and soon 311. What are the differences between all of these numbers? Most people are familiar with 411 and 911 – call 411 for directory assistance and 911 in case of emergency.

But did you know that 911 service is available in any language? It's true – all members of Toronto's diverse communities have access to life-saving 911 emergency services in more than 150 languages, free of charge. Emergency dispatchers have instant access to interpreters who are available to assist with calls, 24 hours a day. Dispatchers are trained in methods to determine what language is being spoken and in moments will have an interpreter on the line. People needing emergency assistance in any language should not hesitate to call 911 for help.

211 is your community connection. It is the number to call for free information about community, social, health and related community services. 211 connects you with an information specialist who can provide information and referrals 24 hours a day. For example, you can call 211 if you are a newcomer to Canada and are looking for employment training, or if you are concerned about a family member with an addiction and need information about available programs.

You can call 211 if you've lost your wallet and don't know where to go to replace your identification, or if you're looking for marriage counseling, or need to know where the nearest after-hours medical clinic is located.

3-1-1
toronto at your service

In June 2009, Torontonians will be able to call 311 to get information and access to non-emergency City government services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Callers will be able to quickly and easily report the location of a pothole, report missed trash collection or even find out the operating hours of the ice rink nearest their home. Information about any and all City services will be available through 311. In many cases, callers will be able to track the progress of their service requests. Callers to 311 will also have access to assistance in any language.

Each of these numbers – 411, 911, 211 and soon 311– provide different services to city residents. Be sure to dial the right number to reach the service you need.

Meeting the special needs of Toronto seniors

THE City of Toronto is committed to providing seniors with services and programs that meet their daily needs. The City consults with seniors, seniors' organizations, partners and other governments to make sure that these services are readily available and easily accessible. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions the City receives from seniors:

How can I find out about government services and supports?

Seniors can access a directory of over 20,000 community, social, health and government services by phoning 211 or visiting the web at www.211toronto.ca. Contact the City at 416-338-0338. Services and programs are also available on the City's website at www.toronto.ca/seniors. Examples of programs and supports include accommodation, financial resources, publications, parks and recreation, transit and health.

Is there a snow-clearing program for seniors?

Most sidewalks in the former communities of Etobicoke, North York and Scarborough, many sidewalks in East York and York, and some sidewalks in Toronto are plowed within 36 hours if more than 8 cm (approx. 3 inches) of snow falls. However, on streets with continuous on-street parking and where sidewalks are too narrow, residents must clear ice and snow from sidewalks around their property within 12 hours of the end of a snowfall. If you are a senior or if you are a person with disabilities and live in an area where sidewalk snow clearing is not automatically done, you can register for sidewalk snow clearing by calling 416-392-7768 extension # 1.
For assistance with private property snow clearing, seniors and persons with disabilities can call the City at 416-338-0338 to obtain a list of organizations that provide these services. A nominal fee may apply. toronto.ca/faq/seniors.htm

What if I need financial assistance?

There are government and non-government financial and social assistance programs available, including emergency funds, rent banks, Ontario Disability Support Program, Ontario Works and income supplements such as Old Age Security and Disability Benefits. Agencies can also help in filling out forms and filing appeals. Call 211 for more information or visit: www.211toronto.ca

Does the City have Tax and Water Assistance Programs?

Seniors and persons with a disability, who have a low income, may qualify for a rebate on their water charge, and may also be eligible to have their property tax increase deferred or cancelled. You must apply annually for each program. Information about the 2009 program will be available in property tax bills.

What if I need assistance at home?

Home support services are available to you from a variety of sources if you choose to continue to live in your own home. These services may be available to you from a

Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) if your care needs meet the CCAC eligibility criteria. Home support services may also be purchased from a variety of community support agencies. The City directly provides homemaking services for seniors without the financial means to purchase the services on their own, if certain eligibility criteria are met.

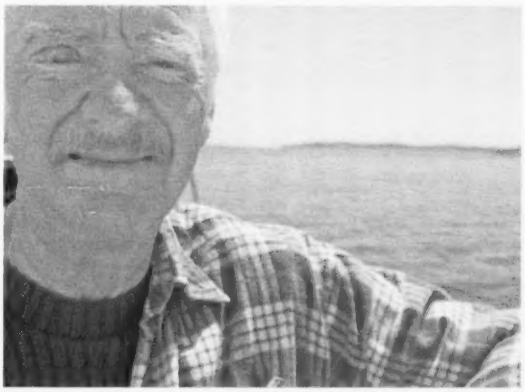
An adult day program, offered by Toronto Long-Term Care Homes and Services, may also be of benefit to you. This program provides a wonderful opportunity for seniors in the community to have "a day out," to participate in social and health promotion programs, and to share a nourishing noon meal with new friends. The program provides a respite for caregivers and helps seniors stay in their own homes.

If you need some level of nursing care and personal support with your activities of daily living, you may wish to consider a long-term care home (also called homes for the aged and nursing homes). Homes for the aged are operated by municipalities or charitable not-for-profit organizations. In general, nursing homes are operated by for-profit organizations, although there are a small number of not-for-profit nursing homes within Toronto. The City of Toronto owns and directly operates ten homes for the aged. Retirement homes and apartments are other available alternatives.

For more information about homemaking services, adult day programs, supportive housing or long-term care homes operated by the City of Toronto, contact the Long-Term Care Homes and Services Division at 416-392-8906 or visit toronto.ca/ltc.

How can I find out about recreation programs that are specifically for older adults?

The City has programs specially designed for older adults. You can meet new friends, visit with old ones, keep active and involved and stay healthy. Activities at seniors' centres, recreation programs (including leisure skating and swimming), special events, workshops and get-togethers will keep your calendar full. Check the City's FUN Guide for programs that may interest you, or visit the City's website for more information: toronto.ca/parks/torontofun/fun-guide-descriptions.htm#olderadults. If you cannot afford to pay for recreation programs, then you might qualify for the City's Welcome Policy program. Find out more about the program at: toronto.ca/parks/welcome_policy.htm.



Services for seniors are also provided by other governments and by various community agencies as well as by the City of Toronto.

toronto.ca/seniors/subject_dir.htm

Your City can help

THE City of Toronto is taking action to directly help residents and businesses in this time of economic uncertainty. As part of the 2009 Operating Budget, the City recently announced new and enhanced programs and services in the areas that will have the greatest impact on those affected by the recession. These are in addition to the many services the City offers to help residents and business be successful and deal with difficult times. The actions taken mean that in 2009:

- 100 families living in Toronto's social housing will not have to fear being evicted because they can't pay their rent.
- 1,300 low-income households that are behind in their rent will be able to access more flexible Toronto Rent Bank loans so they can remain in their housing and avoid eviction or bankruptcy.
- 450 households who must leave their homes to find more affordable housing will have the help they need to pay the last month's rent deposit on an unsubsidized unit that is often required, but not affordable, for many.
- The City will accelerate Toronto's "Starting in the Right Place" plan. Through its 14 employment and social services offices and new web-based tools, the City will continue to help people find jobs, education and training, get financial help, and access childcare, housing and health supports. The City will also expand the Investing in Neighbourhoods and Partnership to Advance Youth Employment programs.
- Toronto Employment and Social Services will create a Toronto Employment Hub that will be located in Metro Hall and will have a full-service employment resource centre, information about City employment opportunities and a hospitality services training program with the YMCA.

Your City can help.
To access City programs that can help you and your family or business, visit
toronto.ca/torontohelps
or call
416-338-0338

- Toronto Public Library will help job seekers by expanding job programs to reach more than 6,000 people, adding 35,000 new books at all 99 branches for additional employment resources, and offering a new online website for job, career and small business information at torontopubliclibrary.ca/jobhelp.
- Low-income seniors living near the City's long-term care homes will be able to access noon-hour cafeterias to purchase prepared nutritious meals at a low cost and eat the meals at the home or take them to go.
- Long-term care homes that also operate adult day programs will be expanding their services to create safe seniors drop-in centres.
- The City will expand the existing homemakers program to provide homemaking services for even more low-income seniors who qualify. These programs help maintain the independence of our seniors and support healthy living.
- Toronto will launch the "Gold Star" program for business developments. The program is an enhanced case management approach which will facilitate municipal approvals for strategic industrial and office developments. Ten projects that will retain/generate 20,000 jobs and $2.3 billion of investment are receiving "Gold Star Service." An additional three projects are anticipated in 2009. Effective immediately, Industrial, Commercial Office and Institutional projects are eligible. Each project is assigned to a District Review Team led by a Planning Director and an Economic Development Officer who work proactively with the proponent and staff across the corporation to identify approval requirements, help resolve any issues, and ensure that the client receives prompt attention.

New web pages on the City's website are dedicated to providing information about the new and enhanced City services and programs to Toronto residents and businesses.

toronto.ca/torontohelps

Moving towards social equity and equitable neighbourhoods

COMMUNITY safety is more than the absence of violence. It's about social equity and ensuring that everyone, particularly youth and seniors in vulnerable communities, is treated with dignity and respect. It's also about making sure that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

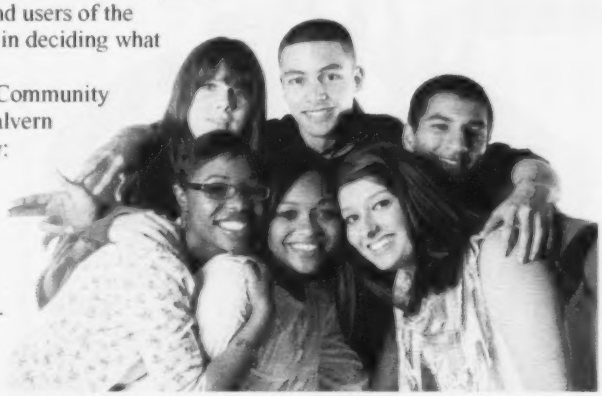
Toronto is Canada's largest city—but it is also a city of neighbourhoods. We live in neighbourhoods, we identify with them and we call them home, but not all neighbourhoods have been created equally. The City of Toronto identified 13 neighbourhoods that, because of their higher levels of poverty, underemployment and lack of community services and social infrastructure, have been designated as priority neighbourhoods for investment. The City is investing in these areas by providing new programs and facilities. The following are two examples of the programs that have been started in Toronto's Priority Neighbourhoods for Investment.

Youth are creating their spaces

CITY staff, youth and youth workers are learning together as they partner to create new youth spaces in the 13 priority neighbourhoods for investment. Youth – the end users of the created space – share in the decision-making and are actively involved in deciding what to spend the money on.

In Malvern, youth are working with library staff, youth workers and Community Development staff to create a dedicated youth space attached to the Malvern Branch. One of the young people involved in the project had this to say: "We appreciate the opportunity to help out in The SPOT initiative. We know what youth in the community want in a centre." The SPOT initiative also benefits City staff as they develop their engagement skills and learn to work innovatively.

Other spaces are being created in Weston-Mount Denis, Dorset Park, Flemingdon/Victoria Village, Eglinton East-Kennedy Park and Steeles-L'Amoureaux. All these projects are being funded through the Partnership Opportunities Legacy (POL) Fund and City partners.



Favourite City Feature, Favourite City Service

Do you have a favourite spot in Toronto? What's special about it?

My favourite place in Toronto has to be Sunnybrook Park (close to Leslie Street and Eglinton Avenue East). It has excellent trails, and it's close to my house. I really enjoy going out for a walk there with my family.

Is there a City service that is special to you?

There are two branches of the Toronto Public Library that I use on a regular basis: S. Walter Stewart and Flemingdon Park. S. Walter Stewart is new, with really good architecture and lots of sunlight; Flemingdon Park is close to my home and has wireless internet.

Shakib Shaikh, North York

Do you have a favourite place in the city? Is there one service that you really like? Write us at ourtoronto@toronto.ca

TORONTO 175 1834-2009 YEARS

Toronto Song Contest

In honour of the City's 175th anniversary, the City of Toronto is hosting the Toronto Song Contest. We're looking for an original song that is evocative of our wonderful city, a song that will pay homage to Toronto's amazing spirit and its unparalleled diversity. Visit toronto.ca/175/song_contest

CITY OF TORONTO PHOTO CONTEST

"Building a great city –together"

Attention all Toronto shutterbugs! The City of Toronto is holding a "Building a great city – together" photo contest. We're looking for powerful images that show Toronto's spirit, energy and unique character.

If you are 18 years of age and over, we invite you to show us Toronto through your eyes by submitting digital photos that reflect life in our great city. Share your photos with us and be eligible for special City of Toronto prizes!

The City of Toronto will post the winning photos online. The City may use these photos and photos receiving an honourable mention in its print and electronic materials.

Entries will be evaluated based on content, image quality, creativity, uniqueness, relevance to the contest theme and category and overall visual appeal. A panel of three people will judge the entries and all judges' decisions are final.

Contest deadline: Entries must be received by Friday, June 12, 2009 at 11:59 p.m. Winners will be notified in July 2009.

Go to **toronto.ca** or **flickr.com** for information about how to enter and contest rules.

SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS TO WIN!

THE 20-MINUTE TORONTO MAKEOVER

TORONTO Livegreen Toronto

Help clean up litter on April 24 at 2 pm. Reuse a plastic bag or get bags/gloves from Toronto Pizza Pizza locations, City Community Centres and Civic Centres. For details and to register, click toronto.ca/litter

Tim Hortons · pizza pizza · SUN · Friends of the Environment Foundation · TORONTO STAR